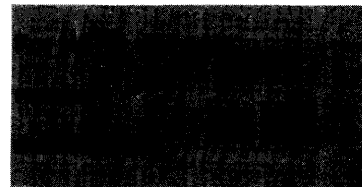


**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections



1. Name

historic Second Presbyterian Church (Clayborn Temple)

and/or common Clayborn Temple

2. Location

street & number 280 Hernando St. _____ not for publication

city, town Memphis _____ vicinity of _____ congressional district

state Tennessee code 047 county Shelby code 157

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name African Methodist Episcopal Church, 13th District

street & number 280 Hernando

city, town Memphis _____ vicinity of _____ state Tennessee 38126

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Shelby County Courthouse

street & number 160 North Main

city, town Memphis _____ state Tennessee 38103

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Tennessee Historical Commission has this property been determined eligible? ☒ yes ☐ no

date March 1972 _____ federal ☒ state _____ county _____ local

depository for survey records Tennessee Historical Commission, 4721 Trousdale Drive

city, town Nashville, _____ state Tennessee 37220

7. Description

Condition

☐ excellent
☐ good
☐ fair

☒ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☒ unaltered
☐ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Clayborn Temple is a Romanesque Revival Church located on the corner of Hernando Street and Pontotoc Avenue near the downtown area of Memphis. The facade faces west on Hernando Street.

The building was constructed of limestone blocks, rusticated externally and with heavy timber framing members forming the roof trusses. The nave ceiling has wood beams that are suspended from the roof trusses by 2 x 4 studs. Interior partitions are of stud construction with wood lathe and plaster covering.

Externally the church is arranged with a crossing of gabled roofs. The main axis runs east-west with two equal side gables intersecting (one north, one south), and forming an equal sized cross. At the southwest corner of the cross is a large belltower and the front and side entrances to the nave are located in it. The northeast corner of the cross has an additional entrance emphasized with a small gabled roof. At the gabled termination of the north, south, and west branches of the cross are large stained glass windows held in place by wood mullions.

The rusticated limestone exterior is not overly ornate but the major functional parts are separately articulated. Clearly recognizable edges define functional masses, that is, the entryway, nave, and tower.

The interior of the church has an unusual design which does not reflect the Romanesque exterior. The nave has basically eight sides defined by a like number of vaults that radiate from a small dome located in the center of the suspended ceiling. The terminating walls below the north, south, east and west ceiling vaults are larger than the other four terminating walls and contain the three main stained-glass windows. A large pipe organ covers the east wall.

The northwest, northeast, southwest and southeast vaults terminate above smaller wall sections forming corners to the north, south, east, and west emphasis. The southwest corner contains an entrance to the bell tower. The southeast corner has an entrance to the sacristy. In the northwest corner is a small stained glass window, and the pulpit stands in the northeast corner; it is from this northeast corner that the curved pews radiate. A second level of pews is formed by a balcony supported on posts above the lower level. The plastered ceiling hangs well below the roof trusses purposely reducing the effect of a high Gothic ceiling.

East of the nave are the ancillary rooms of the church, including the sacristy, classrooms, offices, rest rooms, and a small chapel. These rooms can be entered through a side doorway located at the base of a circular turret facing Pontotoc Avenue.

The cornerstone is located in the southwest corner of the tower. It indicates that the church was dedicated on May 14, 1891.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1891–92 **Builder/Architect** Kees and Long and E. C. Jones

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The congregation of Second Presbyterian Church began construction of a monumental Romanesque Revival Church at the corner of Hernando Street and Pontotoc Avenue in May 1891. Minneapolis architects Frederick Kees and Franklin B. Long designed the building, and Memphian Edward C. Jones served as supervising architect for Kees and Long. The congregation had held a contest to select the architect for the building, and more than fifty designs were submitted. The church was completed in October 1892. Fifty-seven years later the African Methodist Episcopal Church purchased the building and renamed it Clayborn Temple.

Both congregations provided social services to the community. The Presbyterians sponsored a settlement house for low-income residents in the nearby neighborhoods. The AME congregation operated a neighborhood service center and one of the few Negro kindergartens in Memphis.

Clayborn Temple became a focal point for civil rights activities in the 1960s. During the city sanitation workers strike in 1968, Martin Luther King, Jr., delivered the first organizing speech of the strike in this building. On April 4, Dr. King was assassinated in Memphis.

The church is one of only a handful of surviving nineteenth century churches in Memphis. Its style--Romanesque Revival--is even rarer. Its massive walls, heavy tower, and round arches contrast to the prevailing Gothic Revival of the other nineteenth century churches in that city with their emphasis on verticality. Its tower, with slit windows, illustrates the Romanesque emphasis on massive wall structure in contrast to the Gothic Revival tendency to reduce the wall to a minimum. This particular church is significant because this style is rare in ecclesiastical architecture in Tennessee and even rarer in Memphis; here, the Gothic Revival was favored.

Although its membership has diminished in size in recent years, due in part to the ravages of urban renewal which removed many of the dwellings around the church, there is still remains of a strong congregation. An organization, consisting of the congregation, Memphis Heritage, Inc., and other interested groups and individuals, called the Clayborn Temple Restoration Coalition, has been established to formulate plans for the restoration of the church. Although the building has deteriorated during the past ten or more years, there is considerable interest in Memphis in its preservation.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Archives of Second Presbyterian Church, Memphis, Tennessee; various unpublished documents.
The Commercial Appeal, Dec. 31, 1927
Charles C. Gillespie, The History of Second Presbyterian Church (1971)
Joseph L. Herndon, "Architects in Tennessee until 1930, A Dictionary," an M.S. Thesis,
Columbia University, New York, May 1975.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property .62

Quadrangle name Northwest Memphis

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

15 768690 3891950
A 1 5 7 6 8 6 7 0 3 8 9 1 8 5 0
Zone Easting Northing

B Zone Easting Northing

C Zone Easting Northing

D Zone Easting Northing

E Zone Easting Northing

F Zone Easting Northing

G Zone Easting Northing

H Zone Easting Northing

Verbal boundary description and justification

The property nominated is a rectangular lot which measures 200 feet by 135 feet. It is bounded as follows: beginning at a point at the northeast corner of Hernando Street and Pontotoc Avenue; thence east 200 feet along the north edge of Pontotoc Avenue to the west

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Barbara Hume Church, Architectural Historian
Robert E. Dalton, Director of Field Services

organization Tennessee Historical Commission date July 12, 1979

street & number 4721 Trousdale Drive telephone (615) 741-2371

city or town Nashville state Tennessee 37220

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ___ state X local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer, for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Herbert E. Hays

title Executive Director

date 7/17/79

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Carol Shue

date 9-4-79

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

Herbert E. Hays

date 8/6/79

Chief of Registration

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JUL 23 1979

DATE ENTERED

SEP 11 1979

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9

PAGE 2

Information provided by Mara F. Jones, Memphis Heritage, Inc. Memphis, Tennessee

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	JUL 23 1979
DATE ENTERED	SEP 4 1979

CONTINUATION SHEET

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edge of an alley, thence north 135 feet along the west edge of the alley to a point; thence west 200 feet to the east edge of Hernando Street; thence south 135 feet along the east edge of Hernando Street to the beginning. The property is also shown as the tract outlined in red on the attached map. This is the entire parcel of land owned by the African Methodist Episcopal Church, 13th District.

